

Runaway and Homeless Youth Case Study

Organization:	Great Circle, Springfield, Missouri
URL:	www.GreatCircle.org
Program Name:	Great Circle
Funding:	Runaway and Homeless Youth (RHY) grant and the Children Trust
Curricula used:	<i>Love Notes</i>
Curricula benefits:	<p>Using <i>Love Notes</i> with its participant journal allows students, in any of the high schools, to earn credits for the class.</p> <p>The above is true for alternative high schools.</p> <p>At the Basic Center, the curriculum fits well because it is activity driven, provides flexibility to meet the needs of group, each lesson stands alone, and it helps with skill-building in different areas of life, especially in participant's relationships with their own parents.</p>
Target Audience:	<p>Middle College – male and female Junior and Senior high school students attending a community college.</p> <p>Alternative high schools - 14-18 year old male and female students</p> <p>Basic Center and Homeless Shelter - runaway and homeless male and female adolescents.</p>
Audience Demographics:	<p>Gender: Typically evenly spread between male and female.</p> <p>Primary Ethnicity: Mainly Caucasian</p>
Class size:	<p>Middle College – 9 to 10 people.</p> <p>Alternative high schools – 9 to 10 people.</p> <p>Basic Center – 4 to 18 people.</p>
Location of instruction:	<p>Middle College – funded in part by RHY and Children Trust Fund. <i>Love Notes</i> is taught in the Family Living and Parenthood class for pregnant parenting teens and high-risk students.</p> <p>Other alternative high schools have a <i>Love Notes</i> class in health class.</p> <p>At the Basic Center, <i>Love Notes</i> is taught to the teen at the Center itself.</p>

<p>Length of instruction (number of sessions and hours per session):</p>	<p>Middle College – for 1 semester, 2 days a week, 90 minutes per session, for 16 total session. As part of the capstone of program, students do a final presentation to explain an idea they learned as part of their grade.</p> <p>Alternative high schools – once a week for a semester, 8 classes.</p> <p>Basic Center – ongoing classes 3 days a week with groups of 10- 18 year olds. Sessions last 45 to 60 minutes depending on the ages of the students.</p>
<p>Instructor Training Protocol:</p>	<p>A <i>Love Notes</i> facilitator works with the middle school Family and Consumer Sciences teacher so the class can be counted for high school credit.</p> <p>The above is true at Middle College.</p> <p>At the Basic Center, a new coordinator will learn <i>Love Notes</i> through self-study and working with an experienced instructor.</p>
<p>Utilization of teacher and student materials:</p>	<p>Participant journals are used every day at Middle College and at the alternative high schools. Students keep their own journals and do most of the work in class. They use the Trusted Adult Connection (TAC) as a journal entry and each TAC is required to be completed.</p> <p>With so much turnover in youth at the Basic Center, more attention is focused on the activities from <i>Love Notes</i>. Workbooks are used for discussion.</p>
<p>Recruitment Activities:</p>	<p><i>Love Notes</i> is required as part of the Family Living and Parenthood class at Middle College.</p> <p>Other alternative high schools teach <i>Love Notes</i> in the required health class.</p> <p>The classes are an optional activity at the Basic Center. Youth come if they want to during group time. They are strongly encouraged to attend and participate.</p>
<p>Outcomes:</p>	<p>Participants see a change in their thinking by using the pre-post test.</p> <p>Young people at the Basic Center who complete the post-test have indicated an increase in healthier relationship beliefs.</p> <p>The above is true at alternative high schools.</p> <p>At the Basic Center, staff have found youth are more willing to asking for help and use services because of what they learn in <i>Love Notes</i>.</p>
<p>Challenges:</p>	<p>The wide age range of youth, from 10 to 18, at the Basic Center is a challenge. Having enough time to cover the material effectively is always a challenge.</p>

Tips:

Including relationship skills in required classes makes recruitment and retention more successful.

Always include activities, movie, or video. When preparing, include success stories, such as some personal stories that were resolved.

Youth may do more sharing if the relationship skills program is used in a group instead of a class setting.

Be flexible. Spend time on what is working when they are connecting to the materials. You can always come back another time to finish the lesson.

When getting youth involved, use “Tell me what,” or “Tell me about…” as opening phrases. This helps youth to connect and listen and learn. This is more effective than “Let me tell you how it is.”